What is claimed is:

1. A hydraulic drive system adapted for use on a vehicle having an engine and a drive-line operable to transmit driving torque from said engine to a drive axle, said drive system including a hydrostatic pump-motor unit operable, in a pumping mode, to receive drive torque from said drive-line, and operable, in a motoring mode, to transmit drive torque to said drive-line; a high pressure accumulator in fluid communication with a first port of said pump-motor unit through a mode valve means whereby, when said pump-motor unit is in said pumping mode, pressurized fluid is communicated from said pump-motor unit to said high pressure accumulator, and when said pump-motor unit is in said motoring mode, pressurized fluid is communicated from said high pressure accumulator to said pump-motor unit; a low pressure accumulator in fluid communication with a second port of said pump-motor unit; characterized by:

   (a) a filter circuit disposed between said low pressure accumulator and said pump-motor unit;

   (b) said filter circuit defining a relatively unrestricted first flow path from said low pressure accumulator to said second port when said pump-motor unit is in said pumping mode;

   (c) said filter circuit defining a second flow path from said second port to said low pressure accumulator when said pump-motor unit is in said motoring mode; and

   (d) said second flow path comprising one path portion through a filter shut-off valve and a filter element in series, and in parallel therewith, another path portion through a controlled flow restriction, whereby one portion of the fluid flow from said second port flows through said filter element, and the remainder of said fluid flow from said second port flows through said controlled flow

restriction.

2. A hydraulic drive system as claimed in claim 1, characterized by said controlled flow restriction being selected and sized, relative to said filter shut-off valve, such that said one portion of the fluid flow from said port comprises approximately a predetermined percentage of the total fluid flow from said port.

3. A hydraulic drive system as claimed in claim 1, characterized by said filter shut-off valve comprises a two-position, two-way valve including a flow position defining said one path portion, and an isolation position blocking flow from said port through said filter element whereby, when said filter shut-off valve is in said isolation position, said filter element can be replaced without draining fluid from the rest of said hydraulic drive system.

4. A hydraulic drive system as claimed in claim 1, characterized by said relatively unrestricted first flow path defined by said filter circuit excludes said filter valve and said filter element.